

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OMB

23 JUL 1975

Mr. James M. Frey  
Assistant Director for Legislative Reference  
Office of Management and Budget  
Washington, D. C. 20503

Dear Mr. Frey:

Enclosed is a proposed report to Chairman Price, House Committee on Armed Services, in response to a request for our recommendations on H.R. 1267, a bill "To provide for disclosure of information by executive departments to committees of Congress."

Advice is requested as to whether there is any objection to the submission of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

George L. Cary  
Legislative Counsel

Enclosure

Distribution:

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Honorable Melvin Price, Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your request for our comments on H.R. 1267, a bill which would amend certain statutory authorities regarding Central Intelligence Agency reporting to Congress. Each of the four proposed amendments would require the Agency to provide to various congressional committees information which is now available only to the committees which presently oversee Agency activities.

The Central Intelligence Agency was established by the National Security Act of 1947 to coordinate the intelligence activities of the United States, to correlate, evaluate and disseminate foreign intelligence, and to perform other functions and duties related to intelligence, and affecting the national security. Secrecy is critical to the successful performance of certain of these functions. Congressional recognition of this fact is reflected in section 102(d)(3) of the National Security Act of 1947, charging the Director of Central Intelligence with responsibility for protecting intelligence sources and methods, and in certain other complementary authorities and exemptions provided for in the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949. It is also reflected in the special intelligence oversight procedures adopted by Congress, concentrating responsibility and controlling access to sensitive intelligence information. Under these procedures, the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees of both Houses currently exercise specific CIA oversight. The 93rd Congress designated the Foreign Relations and International Relations Committees, in addition to the regular oversight committees, to receive reports of this Agency's non-intelligence gathering activities.

I have supported legislation which would convert CIA's reporting procedures to a statutory requirement. However, H.R. 1267 would go far beyond this. It would expand reporting requirements to such an extent and fragment jurisdiction among so many committees and subcommittees that the oversight process itself would be weakened. Furthermore, as a by-product



of the oversight arrangements proposed in the bill, much sensitive information concerning both substantive intelligence and this Agency's operations would be widely disseminated throughout Congress. As a result, the essential secrecy of much of this information would be jeopardized. Recent experience shows clearly that the wider and more uncontrolled the access to sensitive information, the greater the chance for either inadvertent or purposeful disclosure.

In my view, two of the key interests to be reconciled in adjusting this Agency's relationship with Congress are the need for effective congressional oversight, and the need for protecting the secrecy of sensitive intelligence information. I am opposed to H.R. 1267 because--far from serving either--it would obviate each of these important objectives.

My position has always been that the Central Intelligence Agency will work with Congress in any way Congress chooses to organize itself to exercise its responsibility for oversight and appropriations. In view of the mutual advantage to be gained from effective oversight processes, I urge the Committee to reject proposals which would proliferate and fragment oversight responsibilities. Consistent with the responsibility imposed upon me by the National Security Act of 1947, I urge Congress, in effecting any change in oversight, to take steps to protect intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure. Limiting oversight to the minimum number of committees necessary for effective oversight would contribute substantially to the protection of these assets.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised there is no objection to the submission of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

W. E. Colby  
Director